CURRICULUM Support
for teaching in
Vocational Education
7–12

State finalists and winners in the 2008 NSW Training Awards

The winners of the NSW Training Awards for 2008 were announced at a presentation at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre Darling Harbour, on 4 September. The Awards are an opportunity to honour and recognise the achievements of students and schools, as well as training organisations, employers and small businesses.

Three categories of the Awards program allow specifically for recognition in the Vocational Education in Schools sector:

2008 VET in Schools Excellence Award

All three finalists in this category were Department of Education and Training schools. From the Riverina Region, **Hillston Central School** was this year's winner recognising innovation and excellence in the delivery of vocational education and training to school students.

With just 251 students from Kindergarten to Year 12, Hillston Central School has not allowed student numbers and isolation to limit the opportunities provided. With flexibility and innovation, Hillston Central supports its students to utilise TAFE links and video conferencing to complement the delivery by qualified and dedicated teaching staff. Success comes with the support of strong community partnerships and links to major regional centres, providing quality industry placement opportunities.

Other finalists were **Elderslie High School** (nominated by South West Sydney Region) and **Wadalba Community School** (nominated by Hunter/Central Coast Region).

Elderslie High School has embarked on an ambitious project that has allowed VET Construction students to contribute to the development and building of an outdoor learning space incorporating shelter and benches. Students of VET Primary Industries are involved in growing and harvesting crops on the school farm, while the Hospitality students prepare al fresco dining experiences. The community links and partnerships developed and maintained by the school are essential to the ongoing success and positive outcomes of their VET delivery.

Wadalba Community School is the first government school in NSW to deliver Certificate II in Children's Services, using their on-site childcare facility to enable students to apply their knowledge and skills to the workplace. Ensuring access to prevocational training for Year 10 at risk students and students with disabilities is also a priority for the school.

2008 Vocational School Student of the Year

Hurlstone Agricultural High School's School Captain, **Lloyd Setter**, was a state finalist in the category for 2008 Vocational School Student of the Year. During completion of his Certificate II in Agriculture, Lloyd undertook both farm and veterinarian work, learning to tag, feed and manage cattle, together with developing knowledge in cattle industry transport systems and international pricing.

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<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/index.html>

NEW SOUTH WALES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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NEALS

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Lloyd is passionate about Agriculture and Primary Industries, and plans to continue his study at university next year in Agricultural Economics.

2008 NSW School-based Apprentice of the Year

Deniliquin High School's **Angela Walker** and **Joshua Pauling** from Ballina High School Trade School were strong candidates for the 2008 School-based Apprentice of the Year.

Angela is currently carving a successful career for herself in real estate, having commenced her Certificate III in Property (Real Estate) with Big River Real Estate, themselves the winner of the Small Business of the Year in the 2007 Deniliquin Business Awards.

The success of the new "Trade School" concept was highlighted by finalist Joshua Pauling. Joshua claims his Electrotechnology apprenticeship with Ballina Shire Council positively impacted on his other school work, particularly in Mathematics. His capacity to manage work, TAFE and school commitments in an organised manner has earned him respect and accolades from both his teachers and supervisors.

In the open category for a **NSW Training Initiative, Callaghan College – Jesmond Campus**, was recognised for its strong student-focussed learning environment for Stage 6 students.

Following a partnership formed in 2007, students and staff now play a significant role in the planning, implementation and evaluation of *Surfest*, an international surfing event held in Newcastle. The links with local businesses developed through this partnership have resulted in an increase in student opportunities for development and assessing of competencies on the job, as well as increased experience and exposure to the workplace.

Entries for the 2009 NSW Training Awards will open in late February 2009. Entry forms will be available on line at this time, together with advice on eligibility to enter in each category. Entries will close early May 2009. For more information about the NSW Training Awards visit their website **<http://www.skilling.nsw.gov.au>**.

School VET delivery: qualified teachers for 2009 classes

The return to school in the new year often reveals a variety of changes to staffing – some planned and others unforseen. The challenge for schools and the Department is to ensure established VET classes have an appropriately accredited teacher, or teacher in-training, to commence delivery from the beginning of the year.

To facilitate this, the DET's Retraining Unit, Human Resources Directorate provides for an "emergency replacement" training cohort for teachers of school-delivered Industry Curriculum Frameworks in Term 1 of each year.

Schools must meet specific criteria to be eligible for a centrally funded position in this cohort. The Industry Curriculum Frameworks Information Package (ICFIP) outlines expectations of schools and accredited teachers as follows:

> *A replacement teacher may be required where a class has commenced a course and the accredited teacher has left the school or taken leave for a term or more. Any other accredited teacher on staff would be expected to teach at least two classes (or one class if the accredited teacher is a Head Teacher). All other delivery options must be investigated to fill a gap before nominating a replacement teacher to be trained.*

Each VET teacher training program has a recognised entry benchmark, such as an industrial arts accreditation for aspiring Construction or Metal & Engineering teachers. Teachers with recent and relevant industry experience may apply for entry from outside this benchmark. Application forms are available from regional vocational education consultants and should be submitted with any supporting evidence of qualifications (such as transcripts) and industry experience (letters from employers, clients etc) that are clearly mapped to the units of competency of the relevant course, especially where entry to training is sought from outside the benchmark.

Schools should notify their RTO as soon as they become aware of an impending long term absence, transfer, resignation, retirement or withdrawal from training of a VET teacher. The regional vocational education consultant can advise and assist the school in selecting an appropriate nominee for a training position, together with collating the supporting evidence required for seeking a funded position.

Regional vocational education consultants will provide advice in term one, 2009 regarding semester two VET Teacher Training to extend existing school-delivered VET programs for 2010.

Further information about VET teacher training and funding options can be viewed at **<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/vet_schools/documents/icfip/ICFIPGeneralInfo2008.pdf>**

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School based apprenticeship in Hairdressing

Sophie Lewis is a Year 11 student at Oxley High School in Tamworth. In January this year, Sophie commenced a School Based Apprenticeship in Hairdressing at her local salon, Cody & Co. This pathway has allowed her to combine her school studies with the work she loves, in an industry she wants to continue in when she finishes Year 12. Of industry training, Sophie said, "I just thought you did [study like that] after school. When the lady came up to my school last year to talk about the school based apprenticeships and what you could do, I thought, 'oh, that'd be pretty cool'. I talked to Noel [the owner of Cody & Co] about it because I had gotten my hair done here for many years. I took a brochure to show Noel what it was all about and asked him about maybe taking me on, and he said 'yes' straight away."

Sophie would not have been able to begin an apprenticeship without the support of her employer, Noel Pollard. As the owner of Cody & Co., a busy small business, Noel's willingness to work with Sophie as she learns was a leap of faith. But Sophie's bright personality, organisational skills and enthusiasm within the field have made her an asset to the salon, and clearly he enjoys having her in the workplace. "I've had the salon for about four years, and I knew Sophie as a regular client", Noel explained of the decision to take her on. "It's working out really well, I'm really happy with her. She's well organised and we've got a good routine worked out around her school work."

Many students juggle school work and part time employment. However the advantage of the School Based Apprenticeship is that similar commitments allow students to be paid and gain advanced standing in a certified trade specific qualification. For example, Sophie is enrolled in a Certificate III in Hairdressing at TAFE as part of her School Based Apprenticeship, a qualification that is nationally recognised. She also receives HSC unit credit for the Apprenticeship course, which minimises the catch-ups for the days she misses from school. Sophie will complete stage one of the Hairdressing certificate while at school, and then continue studying and working for the rest of the qualification once Year 12 is completed. At the end of the course, Sophie will have completed the off-the-job requirements for a NSW Hairdressing Licence (essential for the industry), as well as having gained valuable on-the-job experience.

Although the school, TAFE and work commitments require a bit of planning, Sophie's coping well and enjoying the diversity. "I love it here, it's really great," she said while on break at the salon. "I've got myself into a bit of a pattern, a bit of routine. The only thing I struggle with is when I have a whole lot of assessments due at the one time, but Noel's pretty understanding, so that's good."

Across New South Wales more and more students are taking up opportunities like Sophie has, with School Based Apprenticeships running in a variety of industry areas. Although School Based Apprenticeships have only been running since 2007, there are already students undertaking programs in Automotive, Carpentry and Joinery, Electrotechnology, Hospitality, Plumbing, Electrotechnology, Beauty Therapy, Horticulture and Metal and Engineering.

Many thanks to Noel and Sophie for being so friendly and fitting in a chat to us around their busy schedules. Also, many thanks to John Attwood, School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship Coordinator for the New England Region, for helping to spread the word and educate employers and students about these great opportunities.

For information about School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, go to **<www.sbatinnsw.info>**, or speak to your school careers advisor.

Parents and carers influence young people's career development

Careers advisers, transition advisers and teachers can now refer parents to a website designed especially for them:

<www.schooltowork.com.au>

→ **Parents and Community**

This site has been created by DET to empower parents and carers to effectively fulfil the role of supporting young people in their career decision making.

The first hand observations of teachers and careers advisers of the importance of parental influence on children's career development and transition planning is supported by recent formal studies and research.

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What does the research say?

Bedson and Perkins (2006) researched and reviewed literature as background to a parent involvement program developed by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. They noted that "parents occupy a unique and critical place in the transition networks of young people that is often unrecognised by both parents themselves and policy makers."

Some of the key points of their literature review include:

- through career planning with a parent, adolescents showed greater career certainty, less indecision, more career salience, and stronger ego identity
- without parental approval or support, students and young adults are often reluctant to pursue—or even explore—diverse career possibilities
- parental involvement in career-related issues is one of a series of factors that leads to young people engaging in more intense and effective information seeking activities
- parents are one of the most commonly consulted and influential sources of career information and advice, and one of the primary sources of information on transition options
- young people are most likely to turn to mothers for help in making career plans (and this applies equally to both genders and across racial groups)
- in many cases parents are not involved in their children's career decision making because they feel either that they are unqualified to help; they don't want to be dictatorial; or it would be better for their children's independence if they left them to make these decisions on their own

Parents and Young People's Transitions, (accessed 27 August 2008) Brotherhood of St Laurence, **<www.bsl.org.au>**.

So, what are the implications for schools?

- parents/carers need to be made aware that they have an important role in transitions
- parents/carers need to be encouraged to understand their conversations with their children regarding careers are vital for young people's self-investigation, value-forming, career exploration and decision making
- parents/carers need access to the career resources that are available to their children so that they can provide informed and accurate advice and support.

The Vocational Education in Schools Directorate is continuing to provide schools with resources and initiatives to empower parents in supporting the career development of young people.

The ***Parents and Community*** web page designed for parents and carers includes up-to-date links to a variety of resources under the headings:

- Partnerships in Career Planning
- Career Development
- Career Information
- Subject Information
- Moving On – Leaving School

Cards promoting the web page will be sent to schools for use in 2009.

Other publications developed by the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate, which parents would also find useful are:

- *Parents and Carers Guide to Workplace Learning*. This popular publication is distributed to parents through schools across the state and includes a detailed section on "The Best Ways to Help Your Child" as well as other practical information about work experience and work placements.
- *Career Development for Students in NSW Public Schools* is a glossy one-page leaflet informing parents and the community about DET Careers programs, with a list of useful resources and websites.

Both of these publications are great handouts for parent events. They have been distributed to schools but further copies can be acquired on request. Schools are encouraged to promote the ***Parents and Community*** web page to their school community and where appropriate link it to their school website.

Please contact the Vocational Learning Team for further information, or to share or discuss initiatives at your school for supporting parents/carers as career companions to young people. Contact details are available on the back page of this issue in the *Useful contacts* section.

Has the School to Work Program trickled up?

Employability skills at university

Attention all selective high school staff and teachers of university-bound students – have a look at the box below:

Increase your employability

Qualifications and technical skills alone are often not enough to help you land the job you want. Australian employers have identified a set of 'Employability Skills' that they look for when both hiring candidates and promoting employees.

These 'Employability Skills' are considered essential to successful workplace performance regardless of the industry or vocation, and include:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Problem-Solving
- Initiative & Enterprise
- Planning & Organising
- Self-Management
- Learning
- Technology.

If you want to boost your chances of standing out from the crowd when applying for a job, you need to seriously consider engaging in activities that help you develop these 'Employability Skills'.

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- Does it look like something connected with the blue Employment Related Skills Logbook, or School to Work?
- Are you thinking, "this is not of real importance for university-bound students"?

The source of this information is the *University of Sydney* website **<www.careers.usyd.edu.au/students/jobsearch/employability.shtml>**.

The University of NSW website also contains information on "Employability Skills". In fact UNSW has set up *myPortfolio*, which includes the *UNSW Employability Skills Log* and the *Postgraduate Research Log*.
<www.careers.unsw.edu.au/careered/planning/knowYourself/employability.aspx>

These and similar resources from other universities assist students to document their Employability Skills and other graduate attributes. Universities, like schools, are in the process of embedding employability skills into their curriculum.

The *Graduate Employability Skills* report was prepared in October 2007 for the Business Industry Higher Education Collaboration Council and the then Minister for Education, Science and Training to investigate how universities develop, integrate, teach and assess employability skills, and how graduate employability skills might be assessed and reported upon.
<www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/publications_resources/profiles/graduate_employability_skills.htm>

Why are the government and universities looking at graduate employability skills?

As with Employment Related Skills in schools, students are encouraged to make the connection between learning and the application of academic knowledge and skills in the workplace.

According to the executive summary of the report,

> *… some employers believe that universities are providing students with a strong knowledge base but without the ability to intelligently apply that knowledge in the work setting. This is backed up by international research.*
>
> (*Graduate Employability Skills: An examination of the development, teaching, assessment and reporting of graduate employability skills in the higher education sector, 2007* p. 2)

What are the report recommendations to improve graduate employability?

Many of the recommendations in *Graduate Employability Skills* reflect those in the NSW BOS syllabus *Key Competencies* and the NSW DET School to Work program.

For example:

- to explicitly identify employability skills in all university curriculum
- to improve and increase access to Work Integrated Learning (WIL)
- to enhance teaching and assessment of employability skills
- to explicitly report on employability skills demonstrated through Work Integrated Learning
- to encourage more effective integration of employability skills in student e-portfolios
- to encourage businesses to provide structured cadetships.

> (*Graduate Employability Skills: An examination of the development, teaching, assessment and reporting of graduate employability skills in the higher education sector, 2007* pp. 5–6)

What are the implications for students in DET schools?

Students (and their parents) aiming for university study should be alerted to the need for both academic achievement and employability skills. Raising awareness of the increased emphasis on employability skills and vocational programs at university level may be one way to motivate teachers, parents and students to take a closer look at the value of School to Work and VET programs at school.

It now appears that students who start university with a solid background of workplace learning and strongly developed Employment Related Skills will have the confidence to build further on their learning and skills at tertiary level. They will already have the language, experience and understanding to help them with university level activities including maintaining their e-portfolios and engaging in Work Integrated Learning.

For information and support materials on Employment Related Skills in DET schools go to the Vocational Education in Schools intranet site
<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/vet_schools/index.html>
and click on "School to Work" then "Teaching and Learning." The Vocational Education in Schools intranet site is also accessible from **<www.schooltowork.com.au>** using your DET login and password.

If you have experience or ideas to share regarding implementing School to Work with university-bound students, please contact Janet Kossy at the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate, (02) 9266 8937 or <janet.kossy@det.nsw.edu.au>.

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Homebush Boys High School: Personal Action Plans

The proof of Homebush Boys High School's whole-school commitment to supporting students in career planning is in their *School to Work Planning Program: Pathways to the Future*.

Homebush Boys High School recognises the value of students in Years 9–12 developing a *Personal Action Plan* and models how the School to Work Program can be integrated into the core business of school life for students. The outcomes are significantly greater as a result of school leaders and staff working collaboratively to implement a coordinated whole school approach that is made explicit for the school and its community.

Once a student develops their *Personal Action Plan*, they have ongoing opportunities to review and refine that plan. Students are provided time with their Roll Call teacher, who helps them individually to identify how they can achieve their intended goals.

The Roll Call Teachers were encouraged to adopt Action Planning at a session on a School Development Day, and armed with a list of resources, can effectively support students to achieve their goals and develop *employment related skills*.

Students are first introduced to the *School to Work Planning Program: Pathways to the Future* through a half day workshop in Year 9. They are also introduced to two online products - the *DET Student Pathways Survey*, accessed through DET intranet and *Career Builder*, accessible via the internet. The school utilises a range of strategies that support their students' career development and increases each student's ability to self-manage their learning and career planning.

Students' *Personal Action Plans* are signed by the student, parent/caregiver and Year Adviser (or nominee), indicative of the collaborative and supportive environment in which each student's planning and goal setting is undertaken. The *Personal Action Plan* is then acknowledged on the student's school report.

The school uses a variety of strategies to enhance the Program:

a. Student activities, resources and outcomes

- online use of the *DET Employment Related Skills Logbook* by students to record employment related skills and enterprising attributes they gain through their classroom experiences, in extra curricula activities, as well as work and community involvement
- students' participation in the online *DET Student Pathways Survey* in Year 9 and again in Year 11. Students reflect on changes in their self-efficacy and identify their future actions
- students' *Personal Action Plans* are monitored and supported by Roll Call Teachers in designated weeks throughout the year
- student involvement in extracurricular activities, part-time work and community service is tracked
- integration of personal action planning into Study Skills Day in Years 10, 11 & 12
- Homebush Boys High School *Careers Alert* website and email alert system – also promoted to parents
- access to courses such as Senior First Aid and industry OHS (Construction) etc. that provide students with access to careers.

b. School coordination

- whole school commitment to support student learning and career development, evidenced in the school's action plan and faculty management plans
- use of a staged approach to implement the program and provision of multiple opportunities for students to review their *Personal Action Plans* in recognition that a student's career and transition goals change as they mature
- access the *DET Student Pathways Survey: School Report* to review student perceptions that inform whole school planning in the context of other school data
- students requiring literacy support are identified through the Literacy Team and supported
- posters displayed in classrooms raise awareness of vocational and enterprising skills students can develop in their class activities
- faculties encouraged to organise industry visits with students, including TAFE and university days relevant to their faculty
- School to Work faculty mentor is allocated time in faculty meetings.

c. School community

- promotion of the Program through the school newsletter and newspaper articles
- invitation to community partners and training organisations to participate in projects that enhance student's employability skills.

James Yoon selected for UBS Finance Academy

James Yoon is an outstanding example that highlights the success of the Homebush Boys High School, *School to Work Planning Program: Pathways to the Future*.

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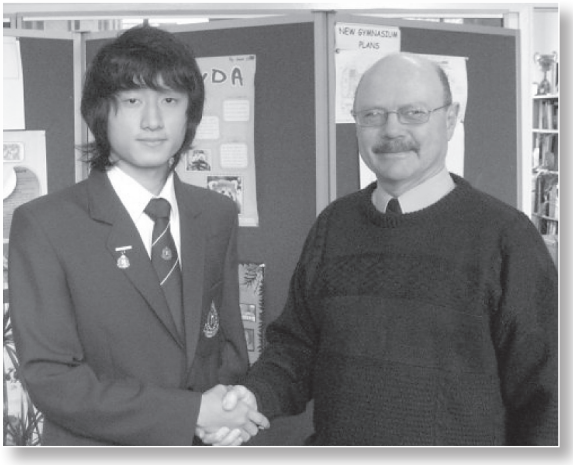

James Yoon is congratulated by School Principal Dr Ian Paterson, on his selection for the UBS Finance Academy.

The UBS Finance Academy, established in 2003 offers selected students an opportunity to explore a wide range of career opportunities in finance. This year James was selected as one of 50 students chosen from public schools in ACT, NSW and Victoria.

James found out about this opportunity through his school's Careers Alert website and put together a very professional resume using the template from the *School to Work Employment Related Skills Logbook*. In his resume he referred to his participation in the *Australian Business Week* program run in Term 4 each year for Year 10 students, and being nominated "Businessman of the Week" by students, teachers and mentors.

A residential program, the UBS Finance Academy was this year held at Dunmore Lang College, Macquarie University from 7 – 11 July. Through the course James had the opportunity to explore previously unknown career opportunities in finance and investment banking, and develop contacts and friendships with students from other schools.

DET Student Pathways Survey

The *DET Student Pathways Survey*, an on-line self-efficacy tool, is used by schools to encourage students to consider their intentions in regards to further education and training, their confidence in career planning and accessing career resources, as well as the influences that impact on their career and transition thinking. It provides an excellent basis for individual career counselling, and can be used with existing tools, practices and programs to better support students career planning, increase student motivation and student engagement.

The survey allows schools to capture data which reflects their student's perceptions and student voice. This useful information can inform school planning to better support students in their career and transition planning.

The *DET Student Pathways Survey* is supported by resources for three different audiences:

- *Student Pathways Survey School Implementation Manual* (for teachers and the Careers Adviser)
- the *Student Feedback Report* generated from the Survey (for students, parents and the Careers Adviser)
- data access for schools (relevant to the Principal and Careers Adviser)
- *DET Student Pathways Survey: School Report* (for school executive planning).

All DET support materials discussed in this article can be accessed through the DET intranet. The *Vocational Education in Schools Directorate* homepage **<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/vet_schools/index>** highlights a number of easy links to the Logbook Online, Student Survey and so on.

To discuss the Homebush Boys High School Personal Action Plan example, contact Tom Pinkey, Careers Adviser by email <kieran.pinkey@education.nsw.gov.au> or telephone (02) 9764 3611.

NSW VETiS WorldSkills Gold Medal Winners honoured

On August 28, gold medal winners of the National WorldSkills competition were honoured at a special reception hosted by the Minister. As part of their prize, each student was presented with a scholarship to study a course of their choice at any TAFE NSW Institute during the next two years.

Winners were **David Watson** of Dubbo College Senior Campus (Information Technology), **Richard Callaway** of Tumut High School (Primary Industries), **Angela Reynoldson** of Corowa High School (Retail), **Kate Crocker** of Asquith Girls High School (Food & Beverage), **Tia Provost** of Ulladulla High School (Business Administration) and **Mitchell Faint** of Armidale High School (Tourism through Armidale TAFE College).

Back Row (L–R): Brad Davison, David Watson, Richard Callaway
Front Row (L–R): Angela Reynoldson, Kate Crocker, Tia Provost

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Useful websites for Vocational Education

Vocational Education in Schools Intranet
<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/vet_schools/index.html>

Vocational Education in Schools Internet
<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/index.html>

National Training Information Service
<http://www.ntis.gov.au/>

Board of Studies NSW
<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/>

Careers Advisory Services
<http://www.cas.det.nsw.edu.au/>

Work Placement
<http://www.workplacement.nsw.edu.au/>

Boyz@work
<http://boyzatwork.det.nsw.edu.au/index.html>

Girlswork
<http://girlswork.det.nsw.edu.au/index.htm>

Jobs Alive
<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/jobsalive/index.htm>

Enterprise Learning
<http://www.enterpriselearning.nsw.edu.au/>

School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships in NSW
<http://www.sbatinnsw.info/>

Useful contacts

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